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ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of cooperating teachers' post teaching conference task statements on student teachers' interactive teaching behaviors. Two cooperating teachers who had completed a seminar on supervisory effectiveness, two physical education student teachers, and two classes were chosen for data collection. The first targeted class was observed by the cooperating teacher and then regularly followed by a break from instruction so that the student and cooperating teacher could immediately discuss the observed lesson. The second observed class occurred regularly immediately after the teaching conference. All post lesson conferences were audiotaped. Results, presented in the form of case studies, were as follows: cooperating teacher 1 stated 29 task statements across eight lessons with the greatest emphasis being in the categories of instruction and feedback. Student teacher 1 achieved 15 of the 29 task statements identified. Cooperating teacher 2 stated 36 task statements across nine lessons. The focus of her statements were on instruction, management, and organization. Student teacher 2 integrated 23 of the tasks. It was concluded that cooperating teachers and student teachers need to identify tasks and then work together until the given task is achieved. (Contains 42 references.) (Author/LL)

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The Effect of Post Teaching Conferences on the Instructional Behaviors of Student Teachers

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Running Head: Post Teaching Conferences

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to identify the influence of cooperating teachers' post teaching conference task statements on student teachers' interactive behaviors. Two female elementary cooperating teachers who had completed a one week seminar on supervisory effectiveness, and two male student teachers volunteered to take part in this study. Two classes which met twice a week were chosen for data collection. The first targeted class was followed by a break from instruction (planning period, lunch) so that the student and cooperating teacher could immediately discuss the observed lesson. The second observed class occurred immediately after the teaching break. Both cooperating teachers were asked to: (a) observe the first targeted class (observation strategies were decided by the cooperating teacher); (b) conference with the student teacher at the conclusion of the targeted class; (c) observe the second targeted class (observation strategies were decided by the cooperating teacher). All post lesson conferences were audiotaped. This routine was followed until the end of the student teaching experience. Cooperating teacher 1 stated 29 task statements with the greatest emphasis being in the categories of instruction and feedback. Student teacher 1 achieved 15 of the 29 task statements identified. Cooperating teacher 2 stated 36 task statements. The focus of her statements were on instruction, management, and organization. Student teacher 2 intergrated 23 of the tasks.

The Effect of Post Teaching Conferences on the Instructional Behaviors of Student Teachers

A major goal of most undergraduate physical education teacher education (PETE) programs is to develop future teachers who can demonstrate effective interactive teaching behaviors. The systematic development of these interactive behaviors is often done via practical fieldwork which involves a sequence of teaching experiences beginning with peer teaching and culminating with student teaching.

Student teaching has been identified as one of the most widely accepted components of teacher education programs. Renown educators such as Conant (1963) and Andrews (1964) describe student teaching as the most important part of teacher preparation. This assertion is supported by the high ratings teachers consistently place on their student teaching experience (Copeland & Boyan, 1975; Karmos & Jacko, 1977; Taggart & Wilkinson, 1985) and the attention that state and national groups are placing on teaching and learning the professional role of a teacher (Carnegie Forum's Task Force, 1986; Murry, 1986).

Although student teaching is one of the most widely accepted components of teacher education programs, researchers have criticized it for failing to have evolved much beyond the early apprenticeship model used in the training of skilled trades, and for lacking a sound theoretical base, a commonly shared structure, and set of activities (Guyton & McIntyre, 1990; McIntyre, 1983). Watts (1987) and Zeichner (1987) state that major differences exist between and even within university teacher preparation programs in the way that the purpose and goals of the student teaching experience are conceptualized and organized, and subsequently implemented. Given these deficiencies, it has been

suggested that student teaching is far from fulfilling its potential (Guyton & McIntyre, 1990).

Reaching the full potential of the student teaching experience hinges on the selection of a cooperating teacher who can demonstrate effective pedagogical and supervisory behaviors. Although the cooperating teacher is only one member of the student teaching triad (student teacher, university supervisor, cooperating teacher), it is generally agreed that the cooperating teacher has the most influence on the student teacher (Copeland, 1980; Karmos & Jacko, 1977). Unfortunately, this influence is often viewed as negative by university faculty because of reported deficiencies in the cooperating teacher's ability to supervise effectively (Grimmett & Ratzlaff, 1986).

Cooperating teachers perceive that the role of the supervisor is to provide demonstration lessons (exemplary role model), guide student teachers in the planning of lessons, observe them teach, provide them with feedback about their instructional and managerial behaviors, and support and encourage them in their personal growth (Enz & Cook, 1992). The study of supervisory conferences, however, indicates that many of the cooperating teachers' perceived roles are not performed effectively. Student teachers' instructional behaviors are seldom the focus of post teaching conference discussions. Most frequently, the thrust of the verbal interaction between the cooperating teacher and student teacher revolves around specific instructional occurrences and noninstructional tasks (Koehler, 1986; Tannehill & Zakrajsek, 1988). O'Neal (1983) found that 80% of the dialogue between cooperating and student teachers focused on class events and activities not related to instruction. When teaching behaviors were discussed during the supervisory conference, the cooperating teacher's feedback was described as being general, deferred,

vague, implicit, or negative (Brunelle, Tousignant, & Pieron, 1981; Hawkins, Wiegand, & Landin, 1985).

Appropriate supervision of the neophyte is an essential component of the student teaching experience (Metzler, 1990; van der Mars, 1989). With the supervisory responsibilities of the student teaching experience, in many instances, resting solely with the cooperating teacher, it is essential that the cooperating teacher possess effective supervisory skills. Cooperating teachers can be trained to be effective supervisors and, in turn, have a positive effect on student teacher's instructional and cognitive behaviors (Cramer, 1978; Cruickshank, 1987; Glassberg & Sprinthall, 1980; Marrou, 1989).

Cooperating teachers who have been trained in supervisory techniques emphasizing observation, systematic data collection, analysis of behavior, and feedback feel more comfortable working with student teachers, and are more effective in changing student teachers' instructional behaviors, as well as their own conferencing behaviors (Nagel, Berg, Malian, & Murphy, 1988; Twa, 1984). Killian and McIntyre (1986) found that cooperating teachers who were trained in supervisory techniques were more likely to offer preservice teachers feedback about their teaching performance than cooperating teachers who received no training. Furthermore, student teachers perceived the student teaching experience to be stabler and more positive in terms of the amount and type of dialogue with the cooperating teacher when working with trained cooperating teachers (Wheeler, 1989). In another study cooperating teachers who had been trained in supervision strategies were rated more positively by student teachers than those who had not (Whitehead, 1984).

The purpose of this study was to investigate cooperating and student teacher interactions during post teaching conferences. The major objective of this study was to identify the influence of cooperating teachers' post teaching

conference task statements on student teachers' interactive behaviors during subsequent lessons.

Methods

Subjects

Two female cooperating teachers volunteered to take part in this study. Each cooperating teacher was employed full time at the elementary level. Neither had assigned coaching responsibilities. Each cooperating teacher had received training in supervisory effectiveness prior to the beginning of the study.

Each of the student teachers also volunteered to be subjects. Both male student teachers matriculated from the same undergraduate program. During the program's first teaching experience the preservice teachers taught fundamental motor skills to one child, twice a week, for eight weeks. The second teaching experience entailed teaching complete units of instruction (6 to 8 lessons) to small groups (8 - 16) of elementary school students, while in their third experience they taught intact classes of elementary and secondary school students daily for six weeks. The preservice teachers were audio and videotaped across all thru teaching experiences.

Setting

The student teaching assignments were at public schools with student population identified as middle class. The average number of students in the physical education classes was 25. All classes were co-educational and required.

Student teacher 1's (ST1) targeted classes were both first grade. The subject matter taught during the six weeks of data collection included juggling (scarves and bean bags), rhythms, and basic basketball skills (dribbling and passing). Second grade classes were targeted for student teacher 2 (ST2). Subject matter taught included basic basketball skills (passing, dribbling), striking skills (with bats), and juggling (scarves and bean bags).

Supervisory Training

Each cooperating teacher received supervisory training prior to the study. Training consisted of completion of a one-week summer seminar which included review of teacher effectiveness research, student teaching goals and objectives as identified by university PETE faculty, coder training in three observation instruments, and supervisory conferencing strategies.

The supervisory training began with discussions and presentations on effective teaching research. This topic was selected to provide the teachers with a basic understanding of the role that research on teaching played in the development of the university physical education teacher preparation program.

In addition to research on teaching, a description of the theoretical and practical components underlying the undergraduate physical education teacher preparation program were discussed during the first session. Information about the theoretical and practical aspects of the undergraduate program were presented to clearly articulate the types of skills and decision making abilities our students would take with them to the student teaching experience.

Instruction on basic systematic recording techniques using three different observation instruments were introduced and practiced. A modified version of the Academic Learning Time-Physical Education (ALT-PE) system (Wilkinson & Taggart, 1985), the Qualitative Dimensions of Lesson Introduction, Task Presentation, and Lesson Closure (QDITC) instrument (Byra, 1992: Rink & Werner, 1989), and an event recording strategy to code teacher verbal feedback statements were introduced. These three instruments in combination can be used to obtain a rich description of teaching processes in instruction. Furthermore, they are utilized throughout the undergraduate program and would allow the cooperating teacher and student teacher a common ground for which to base student teaching evaluations.

After having been introduced to the three systematic observation instruments, the seminar participants were given time to practice coding teacher behaviors using the instruments. The participants coded three 10-minute lesson episodes to criterion to develop their coding skills. The final task was for each teacher to code, analyze, and summarize their own teaching using the three instruments presented earlier in the seminar. Prior to arriving for the five-day seminar, all participants were instructed to have available a videotape of their own teaching consisting of two or three 30-minute lesson episodes for use during the seminar.

The presentation of conferencing techniques focused on (a) discussing performance based on collected data, (b) the need for the cooperating teacher to specifically identify areas of strength which should be continued and areas of weakness which need to be improved, and (c) the need for both the student teacher and cooperating teacher to work together toward the maintenance and improvement of identified behaviors.

Target Behaviors

The dependent variables were the student teachers' interactive teaching behaviors. Cooperating teacher task statements were the independent variables in this study. Task statements included those statements which specifically identified the behaviors which the cooperating teacher thought needed to be improved. An example of a specific task statement is "increase positive specific feedback to a rate of one per minute".

Procedures

Both cooperating teachers were asked to identify target classes which occurred immediately before and immediately after an extended period of free time. Classes before and after lunch were selected. Every effort was made to select two classes which were as close to the same age group as possible. Fortunately, both

cooperating teachers' schedules had the same grade level during both of the targeted classes. Cooperating teacher 1 (CT1) had first grade classes the lesson before and immediately after lunch, and cooperating teacher 2 (CT2) had second grade classes prior to and after lunch.

The same classes were videotaped twice a week throughout the six week study. Videotaping and post teaching conferences began when the student teachers began teaching their first complete unit of instruction (during either week four or five). The taught lessons between when the student teacher took full contol of the cooperating teacher's classes (week three) and the beginning of a new unit were only videotaped and used to collect baseline data. Post teaching conferences were not held during the collection of baseline data.

Baseline data was collected for the purpose compare student teacher instructional lesson between each targeted class without imput from the cooperating teacher, and to allow the first and second grade classes to become desensitized to the presence of video equipment.

Once the student teacher began teaching the first full unit, each cooperating teacher was asked to: (a) observe the first targeted class (observation strategies were decided by the cooperating teacher); (b) conference with the student teacher at the conclusion of the targeted class; and (c) observe the second targeted class (observation strategies were decided by the cooperating teacher).

The researcher provided each cooperating teacher with a tape recorder and individually labeled cassettes. The tape recorder was kept by the cooperating teacher for the duration of the study. Each side of each cassette was used for one post teaching conference. Each targeted lesson was audiotaped and videotaped by an independent party.

Data Analysis

All post teaching conference were transcribed. Each conference was subjected to content analysis by the researcher and an independent coder. Each post teaching conference transcript was classified using qualitative data deduction techniques. The task statement and categories were identified and noted on separate file cards.

The coders then categorized each statement in regard to context area (e.g., instruction, management, safety). Discrepencies were discussed and reanalyzed. Identified context areas were: (a) Instruction - presentation of content knowledge; (b) Management - enhancement of student on task behavior; (c) Organization - arrangement of the instructional environment; (d) Feedback - student teacher interaction; (e) Activity - enhancement of pupil engagement in the subject matter; (f) Monitoring - student teacher awareness of pupil behavior; (g) Learning - student teacher assessment/evaluation/extension of pupil performance; and (h) Safety - establishment of an appopriate learning environment.

Independent coders were given a list of the task statements for a given conference and the videotape of the lesson which corresponded with the conference. The coders were asked to watch the tape, and assess whether the task statements were or were not achieved. Each coder provided either qualitative (e.g., anecdotal statements) or quantitative (e.g., rate of specific feedbacks per minute) measurements to ascertain the achievement or lack of for each task statement.

Interobserver Agreement

The transcripts were coded and recoded by both observers until reliabilty reached 90%. Separate sheets on which were identified all of the emitted task statements of each individual post teaching conference were developed.

Coders were given a task statement sheet and the corresponding tape and was asked to assess the implementation of each task statement.

Twenty percent of the videotaped lessons were selected at random and reanalyzed by an independent observer to determine interobserver agreement. The independent coder was given the same task statement sheet and corresponding videotape. Both codings were then compared for interobserver agreement. those lessons which did not have 80% agreement were discussed and then coded by a third independent coder.

Results

The results are presented in the form of case studies. The case study method allows for deeper insight into the relationship between each cooperating teacher's task statements and the achievement of the task statements by their student teacher (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 1985).

Baseline data was analyzed using a modified version of the Academic Learning Time-Physical Education (ALT-PE) system (Wilkinson & Taggart, 1985), the Qualitative Dimensions of Lesson Introduction, Task Presentation, and Lesson Closure (QDITC) instrument (Byra, 1992: Rink & Werner, 1989), and an event recording strategy to code teacher verbal feedback statements. Instructional behaviors across lessons were markedly similar for both student teachers.

Student Teacher 1

CT1 provided 29 task statements across eight lessons. Nine statements dealt with instructional behaviors, five with feedback, and four with monitoring. Management and organization was addressed four times, learning and activity twice, and safety was discussed once.

Cooperating teacher 1's task statements related to instruction focused mainly on the presentation of information. Following are two examples: Provide a lesson

purpose; Use the terminology dominant and non dominate hands. All nine of the task statements related to instruction were stated within the first four lessons.

ST1 achieved 15 of the 29 stated tasks (51.7%). He had success achieving the stated tasks within the categories of monitoring, management, organization, activity, and safety. These tasks were more technical in nature (e.g., have the students place their scarves in a basket after they line up to leave, move around the gym more frequently while the students are practing in their self space, give the class five minutes at the end of class to practice for the upcoming skills test) and not specifically tied to the content being taught (juggling/basketball).

ST1 seemed to have the greatest difficulty changing his instructional behaviors. He was unsuccessful in adjusting his presentation/demonstration from one lesson to the next. For example, he did not (a) use the terminology dominant and non-dominant hand; (b) provide a lesson purpose; or (c) provide a motivational objective with a specific criterion, even after it was stated by the cooperating teacher.

ST1 also had trouble adjusting his interactive behaviors within the feedback and learning categories. He had difficulty providing positive specific feedback and extending his activities in regard to his pupils' individual performance. Summarized data can be found in Table 1.

Student Teacher 2

CT2 provided 36 task statements across nine lessons. Instructional (9) and managerial (8) task statements were the two areas addressed most frequently. Organizational and activity statements were discussed six and five times respectively. Learning and safety were addressed three times and monitoring twice.

Instructional statements focused on specific aspects of the student teachers presentation and demonstration. "Provide a motivational objective", "Repeat your

skill cues three or four times", and "Use students to demonstrate the planned activity at each station" are examples of instructional task statements of CT2. "Stop students before the first rotation and make sure they know where to rotate to", "Use lines on the line as targets instead of putting tape down", and "After you give a motivational objective you need to check whether the students achieve it or not" are example statements within the respective categories of management, organization and learning.

ST 2 achieved 24 of the 36 stated tasks (66.7%). He successfully achieved at least half of the tasks across all categories. Most success was found within the categories of instruction, organization, learning, and safety.

ST2 was very consistent in successfully implementing changes in his lessons. He successfully implemented a minimum of 67 percent of the stated tasks across seven of the nine lessons. He implemented one of three tasks during one of the other lessons, and he did not achieve the sole task for the second lesson. Summarized data can be found in Table 2.

Discussion and Conclusion

While the results of these case studies provides some insight into the effectiveness of post teaching conferences, it also raises some interesting questions. One question is why were the results between subjects within the instructional category so different? Both student teachers had similiar undergraduate experiences, similiar grade points, and were both older than the "traditional" student. Also, when percentage of achievement is calculated without the instructional category, respective totals are 60 and 63 percent.

ST 1 spent the majority of this study teaching juggling and rhythms. He did not have a strong background in juggling and rhythms as is indicative of the following post conference discussions.

CT 1: OK, weaknesses or areas of improvement?

ST 1: Learn how to juggle before I come here. (Conference # 2)

ST 1: I'm more lost than they are.

CT 1: And that's a weakness. You don't know the stuff. Don't feel bad if you have to take the little book there and have the picture side open, cause that will show you.

ST 1: How about if I try it by myself this afternoon?

CT 1: OK, how about the 1:20. You can do it by yourself and if you get plumb lost, just look at me and I'll do something. OK, so you don't know it and we just started it and I had the records over the weekend and I didn't get them to you so that's nobody's fault. The kids aren't going to hate you cause you mess up and they aren't going to hate you cause you have to look to me for help or whatever. Cause they aren't like that. And it just shows why you have to prepare ahead of time. (Conference # 6)

This lack of subject matter knowledge seemed to make it very difficult to implement changes within the categories of instruction, provide appropriate feedback, and student learning. In contrast, ST 2 was able to make appropriate changes in his instruction and was able to implement tasks within the learning category.

A second question is, should a student teacher be required to instruct in content areas which are unfamiliar? Performance/Activity courses are viewed as integral parts of an undergraduate program (Arnold, 1979), therefore students should be prepared for their student teaching experience. However, Lawson and Pugh (1981) stated that due to the numerous activities offered within school physical education programs, it is nearly impossible for

graduating students to possess competency in all of them. It is also unclear whether the purpose of an activity course is to master content, to learn how to teach the activity, or both (Arnold, 1979, Bains, 1990). In addition, there is little agreement regarding the number of activity courses that should be required, which activities should be covered, or what level of performance expertise should be attained (Bain, 1990).

If a student is required to teach in any and all content areas, then they either demonstrate the skills before they enter the professional program, learn the skills during the program, develop the skills with the help of the cooperating teacher prior to instruction of the given unit, or a combination of all three. All three options require faculty from teacher education programs to review their current practices and decide if their present program is effective.

If a student teacher has limited content knowledge across several skills/sports, then the success of the final experience will partially be contributed to luck. Was the student teacher lucky enough to be assigned to teach in an area of strength? Was the student teacher lucky enough to be assigned to a cooperating teacher who was willing to work with the student teacher?

A third question is, were the number of task statements given by the cooperating teacher appropriate? CT 1 averaged 3.6 statements per conference, with a range between one and five. She gave either four or five task statements across the first five lessons and three, two, and one, respectively during the final three post teaching conferences. CT 2 averaged four per conference and ranged between one and seven. Even though CT2 gave more tasks per conference, ST 2 realized greater success in achieving the tasks.

Identifying the appropriate number of tasks depends on readiness, recall, and consequences. Readiness can be defined as the match between the

student teacher's developmental level and/or desire and the anticipated change in behavior (Rink, 1985). A teacher must possess the necessary pedagogical skills to make adjustments in a given lesson. Additionally, the adjustments should be attainable. For example, a cooperating teacher who asks a student teacher who gives few positive specific feedback statements to provide specific feedback at a rate of one per minute by the next lesson is setting the student teacher up for failure. Finally, the student teacher must feel that the adjustment is important enough to warrant the change.

A student teacher needs to be able to reflect on the past to adjust future lessons. The past may only consist of the taught lesson that the cooperating teacher commented on. If this is the case, then the student teacher will have to make immediate adjustments in a planned lesson. Research indicates that this is very difficult for beginning teachers to do (Anderson, 1980; Byra & Sherman, 1993; Sherman, 1983). However, if the student teacher has a wealth of similiar experiences to recall, then the adjustment should be made.

The achievement of a given task could also depend on the consequences. Providing a consequence depends on whether the cooperating teacher collected data and compared the data to the stated criterion of the task. If the cooperating teacher does not follow up, then there isn't a consequence, and valuable feedback (either positive,corrective, or negative) is not provided. If there is follow-up, then the student receives reinforcement (i.e., praise), reinstruction, or punishment. The type of consequences will partially depend on the social task system (Tinning & Siedentop, 1985) which had been developed between the cooperating teacher and student teacher during the first weeks of the experience. The social task system is comprised of social tasks which function to create and maintain cordial relationships between the two parties.

Both cooperating teachers collected data, particularly with the Qualitative Dimensions of Lesson Introduction, Task Presentation, and Lesson Closure (QDITC) instrument (Byra, 1992). But it is not known if the cooperating teacher compared the collected data to the specifications of the stated tasks. It is also not known if the cooperating teachers realized that they provided 29 and 36 task statements. CT 1 did implement consequences within the feedback category by giving ST 1 unsatisfactory scores on his final assessment. However, this consequence was not powerful enough to warrant the suggested pedagogical changes during the length of this study.

The appropriate number of tasks will then depend on the cooperating teachers ability to follow up on each task to make sure it is achieved, and readiness of student teacher to adapt his/her preactive and interactive behaviors.

What percentage of the stated tasks should be achieved by the student teacher? Ideally, the answer should be 100%. Each task should be achieved but it may not be achieved immediately. The cooperating teacher and student teacher need to identify tasks and then work together until the given task is achieved. In addition the achieved tasks should be in pedagogical areas which are emphasized by the teacher education program. The successful achievement of tasks which are deemed important by all parties involved is the best way to provide future teachers with the necessary interactive skills to be effective.

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Table 1. Presentation of Cooperating Teacher 1's Task Statements and Student Teacher 1's Achievement of the Stated Tasks.

Categories	# of Tasks N=29	Percent of Total	# of Tasks Achieved N=15	Percent Achieved	Percent Not Achieved
Instruction	9	31	3	33.3	66.7
Feedback	5	17	2	40.0	60.0
Monitoring	4	13.5	3	75.0	25.0
Management	3	10	2	66.7	33.3
Organization	3	10	2	66.7	33.3
Activity	2	7.5	2	100.0	0.0
Learning	2	7.5	0	0.0	100.0
Safety	1	3.5	1	100.0	0.0

Table 2. Presentation of Cooperating Teacher 2's Task Statements and Student Teacher 2's Achievement of the Stated Tasks.

Categories	# of Tasks N=36	Percent of Total	# of Tasks Achieved N=24	Percent Achieved	Percent Not Achieved
Instruction	9	25	7	77.7	22.3
Management	8	22	4	50.0	50.0
Organization	6	16.5	4	66.7	33.3
Activity	5	14	3	60.0	40.0
Learning	3	8	2	66.7	33.3
Safety	3	8	2	66.7	33.3
Monitoring	2	5.5	2	100.0	100.0